

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of January 3, 2007 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. Nonetheless, the Examiner is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, 22-25, 30-33, and 38-41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,909,439 to Kuwabara, *et al.* (hereinafter Kuwabara), in view of U.S. Patent 6,898,248 to Elgamal, *et al.* (hereinafter Elgamal).

However, it is stated at page 6 of the Office Action that Claims 4-7, 11-14, 18-21, 26-29, 34-27, and 42-45 present allowable subject matter. It is further stated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claims from which each depends as well as those of any intervening claims.

In order to expedite the prosecution of the application, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 8, 15, 22, 30, and 38 so as to incorporate each of the features deemed by the Examiner to constitute allowable subject matter. Applicants have cancelled dependent Claims 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, 23-26, 31-34, and 39-42. Applicants also have amended dependent Claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 27, 28, 35, 36, 43, and 44 so as to maintain consistency among the claims.

Appln No. 10/723,783
Amendment dated April 2, 2007
Reply to Office Action of January 3, 2007
Docket No. 5853-346-1

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

AKERMAN SENTERFITT

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